

What is Claimed is:

1. An apparatus for providing inventory control of medical objects,
said apparatus comprising:

5 a scanner for scanning each of said medical objects before and
after a surgical procedure and generating a signal each time one of said
medical objects is scanned;

a counter for receiving said signal from said scanning device
and determining a first count of said medical objects before said surgical
10 procedure and a second count of said medical objects after said surgical
procedure; and

a reconciling device for receiving said first and second counts
from said counter and for comparing said first count and said second count
to determine if said first count equals said second count.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said scanner includes a reader
for reading identification data contained on said medical objects.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising an identification
device for receiving said identification data from said scanner and for
identifying an object type of each of said medical objects scanned by said
scanner, said reconciling device receiving said identification data from said
5 identification device and matching identification data received during said
first and second counts to identify a type of one of said medical objects that

was identified during said first count but was not identified during said
10 second count.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said scanner comprises at least one of a laser scanning device, an optical bar code reading device, an optical character reading device, a hand held laser scanning device, a radiological scanning device and a magnetic scanning device.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said counter and said reconciling device comprise a computer system including a memory for storing said first and second counts.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a container for storing said medical objects after use, said container having an opening for receiving said medical objects and at least one sensor for sensing said medical objects upon insertion into said container, said at least one sensor
5 display mechanism being removably coupled to said opening of said container.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said container further comprises an internal counter connected to said sensor for counting said medical objects received in said container.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said internal counter is connected to said counter for transmitting count information to said counter.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said container includes an alarm mechanism connected to said at least one sensor for indicating when said at least one sensor senses one of said medical objects.

10. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said container comprises a disposable jar for storing sharp objects including needles and scalpel blades and a light emitting diode display for providing a visual count of said medical objects.

11. An apparatus for providing inventory control of medical objects, said apparatus comprising:

a container for storing said medical objects after use of said medical objects, said container having an opening for receiving said medical objects;

a counter for counting said medical objects upon insertion into said container, said counter being removably coupled to said opening of said container; and

a display connected to said counter for displaying a count of said medical objects determined by said counter.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising a reconciling device for receiving said count of said medical objects from said counter and for comparing said count of said medical objects with another count of said medical objects prior to use of said medical objects.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said reconciling device comprises a computer system including a memory for storing said counts.

14. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said counter comprises at least one of a laser scanning device, an optical bar code reading device, an optical character reading device, a radiological scanning device and a magnetic scanning device.

15. An apparatus for providing inventory control of absorbent medical objects, said absorbent medical objects including sponges and lap pads, said apparatus comprising:

a rack for storing said absorbent medical objects after use, said
5 rack having at least one slot for holding said absorbent medical objects;

a scale for determining an amount of blood contained in said
absorbent medical objects after use;

a scanner for scanning said absorbent medical objects
contained on said rack and for counting said absorbent medical objects
10 scanned by said scanner; and

a computer system for maintaining a record of said absorbent
medical objects, said computer system connected to said scanner and said
scale for receiving information regarding said amount of blood contained in
said absorbent medical objects and a number of said absorbent medical
15 objects scanned by said scanner.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said scanner further comprises a light emitting diode display for providing a visual count of said absorbent medical objects.

17. A method for providing inventory control of medical objects used in a surgical procedure, said method comprising the steps of:

scanning and counting each of said medical objects before the surgical procedure to obtain a pre-operative count of said medical objects;

5 transmitting said pre-operative count to a computer system for storing said pre-operative count;

scanning and counting each of said medical objects after the surgical procedure to obtain a post-operative count of said medical objects;

10 transmitting said post-operative count to the computer system for storing said post-operative count; and

comparing said pre-operative count with said post-operative count for determining which of said medical objects are missing after said surgical procedure.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said steps of scanning and counting each of said medical objects before and after the surgical procedure includes the step of reading identification information contained on each of said medical objects.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein said step of comparing said pre-operative count with said post-operative count further comprises the step of providing notification of the results of said step of comparing.

20. The method of claim 16, further comprising the steps of:

pre-operatively weighing said medical objects to obtain a pre-operative weight;

post-operatively weighing said medical objects to obtain a post-

5 operative weight; and

comparing said pre-operative weight with said post-operative weight for determining an amount of blood lost during said surgical procedure.